

A 76 ✓

S E R M O N

Preach'd at

P O R T S M O U T H,

December. 31. 1706.

On Occasion of the

General Thanksgiving

F O R T H E

S U C C E S S E S

W H E R E W I T H

It has pleas'd GOD to Bless the Arms
of Her MAJESTY and Her Allies,
this Year.

By WIL. WARD, A.M. Vicar of *Portsmouth*,
and Chaplain to the Right Honourable George Earl
of *Warrington*.

L O N D O N: 

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Two Temple-Gates in *Fleetstreet*. 1707.

SEYMOUR

PORTSMOUTH



By Wm. Ward, A.M. Member of the
and Captain of the High Honorable
of Washington.

Printed for Charles Smith, at the
Two Temple Lane in London.

To the Right Honourable

THOMAS ERLE, Esq;

Lieutenant-General of Her Majesty's
Ordnance, and Governor of *Portsmouth*.

A N D

To the Honourable

Sir JOHN GIBSON,

Lieutenant-Governor of *Portsmouth*.

T H I S

S E R M O N

Is Humbly Dedicated,

B Y

Your H O N O U R S

most Obedient,

Humble Servant,

William Ward.

To the Right Honourable

THOMAS ERLE Esq;

Lieutenant-General of Her Majesty's
Ordnance, and Governor of Portsmouth

AND

To the Honourable

Sir JOHN GIBSON

Lieutenant-Governor of Portsmouth

THIS

SERMON

Is Humbly Dedicated,

BY

Your Honours

most Obedient

Humble Servant,

PSAL. xcviij. verse i.

*The Lord Reigneth, let the Earth re-
joice, let the Multitude of the Isles be
glad thereof.*

SOME Jewish Writers are of Opi-
nion, that this Psalm was com-
posed by *Moses*, upon Occasion
of a great Victory he had ob-
tain'd over *Sihon King of Heshbon*,
as the first Omen of *Israel's* Success in the Con-
quest of the Promised Land.

Others, that it was composed by *David*, after
he had reduced his Rebellious Subjects, Headed
by his Disobedient Son *Absalom*. This the Greek
Interpreters seem to intimate.

But lastly, there are other Opinions seem
more probable, that he indited it upon the huge
enlargement of his Dominions.

The Success and Glory of his Arms was spread
into foreign Nations; in *1 Chron. 18*. We have
the History of his Triumphs; That he subdued
the Kingdoms far and near, established his Do-
minions by the River *Euphrates*; and the Lord
preserved *David* whithersoever he went. *vers. 2*. He

smote Moab, and the Moabites became David's Servants, and brought Gifts; in the following Verses, he vanquished Hadarezer King of Zobab; and so advantageous was the issue of that Battle to the Conquerours, that the Spoil amounted to no less than a thousand Chariots, seven thousand Horsemen, and twenty thousand Footmen; and of the Syrians in Confederacy with Hadarezer, David slew twenty two thousand.

No less great and valuable were the Presents sent him from the King of Hamath, who being rescued by David from the Tyranny and Insults of his Domineering Neighbour, Hadarezer sent Hadoram his Son to enquire of his Welfare, and to congratulate him, because he had fought against Hadarezer, and smitten him; and with him all manner of Vessels of Gold, and Silver, and Brass. *vers. 10.*

After so Glorious Successes, to secure what he had already gotten by his Sword, and strengthen his Arms for future Conquests, he put Garrisons in Syria, Damascus, and in Edom; and all the Edomites became David's Servants.

Thus flushed with Victory, and enriched with the Spoils of his Enemies, but not forgetful of the God that gave them, he breaks out in that joyful Exultation in the Text, *The Lord Reigneth, let the Earth Rejoice, let the Multitude of the Isles be glad thereof.*

In Discourſing on theſe Words,

First, I ſhall, as briefly as I can, explain the Words of the Text.

Secondly, I ſhall ſhew, that the Iſſue of Bat-tel, and the Revolutions of Kingdoms, are diſpoſed by the Wiſe Providence of God.

Thirdly, I ſhall ſhew what Influence the Conſideration of this, ought to have upon us who are met together on this Solemn Occaſion of praiſing God, and rejoicing for the great and glorious Victories he has vouchſafed to the Arms of our Gracious Sovereign, and her Allies.

First, I ſhall, as briefly as I can, explain the Words of the Text.

The Lord Reigneth. By which Words is aſſerted, the Sovereignty of God over all that he has made; That he is Lord Paramount, and keeps the Reins of Government in his own Hands; But ſtill, not ſo as to exclude all Subordinate Powers, and Government; for *David* himſelf was a King, when he indited the Words of the Text.

It is but an unwarrantable Fancy in any, to aſſert from this, or any other Text in Scripture, where the Sovereignty of God is aſſerted, that there is no lawful King on Earth, but God alone,

alone, and that the Regal Power and Title, is a presumptuous Invasion of the Divine Prerogative.

'Tis no Diminution to the Majesty and Grandeur of the King of Heaven, to make, and substitute his Vicegerents here on Earth, any more than for Earthly Kings to appoint their Deputies, and Vice-Roys: Nay, 'tis rather an Argument of his despotick Power and Sovereignty, that they are his Subjects, as we are theirs, and that he is Greater than all the Kings of the Earth.

Let the Earth rejoice; By the Earth is understood the Land of *Judea*; so the *Jews* frequently express their Country in Holy Scripture.

Let the Multitude of the Isles be glad thereof; By which is not chiefly meant, Isles environed by the Seas. In the Opinion of a judicious Author, The *Hebrews* called Islands all Countries divided from them by Sea, or such as they could not come unto, or used not to go unto but by Sea.

In short, when the *Jews* called Countries divided from them by Sea, Islands, they meant those huge Countries beyond Sea, in regard of *Egypt* and *Palestine*, most probably discovered to them by the *Syrians*.

The multitude then of these Isles, thus discovered to the *Jews*, was that vast Continent, with its Islands, now called *Europe*, then inhabited by
the

the *Gentiles*, as appears from *Gen. 10. 5.* where speaking of the Posterity of *Japhet*, the Text saith, *By these were the Isles of the Gentiles divided.*

Here *David* calls on the *Multitudes of these Isles* to rejoice, to join with his own Country in those solemn Praises, by which he celebrated the Majesty and Goodness of God, for those Victories he had obtained, and for the Enlargement of his Dominions.

And now, considering the occasion of this Days Solemnity, has not the rest of *Europe*, with us of this Nation, great Cause to Sing a Hymn of Praise to the Divine Majesty, and a Devout Acknowledgment of His Power, Wisdom, and Providence in the Management of our Affairs, and to celebrate the Glory of this great Monarch *Jehovah*.

The Lord reigneth, let the Earth rejoice, let the Multitude of the Isles be glad thereof.

Thus having explained the Sence of my Text, Secondly, I shall shew, that since the Lord reigneth, it must needs follow that the Issue of Battels, and the Revolutions of Nations are disposed by the wise Providence and Conduct of Almighty God. And here,

First, I shall observe to you, that God, in times of Old, more immediately, and miraculously exerted his Power in behalf of his People,

ple, for the Destruction of their Enemies; as David, *Psal.* 18. 13. &c. elegantly describes that Warfare: The Lord thundered in the Heavens, and the Highest gave his Voice; Hail-Stones, and Coals of Fire: He sent out his Arrows, and scattered them; and he shot out Lightnings and discomfited them.

Thus miraculously God shewed his Works, before the Invention of Man had found out the more modern Instruments of Death; Powder and Ball, those faint Imitations of God's Celestial Fires and Hail-Stones.

Thus it was he destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, and the Cities of the Plain.

And in *Judges* 5. verse 20. The Stars, in their Courses fought against Sisera. Grotius is of Opinion, that great and glorious Victory was obtain'd by the Ministry of Angels: *Angeli Stellarum Nomine appellantur ob Naturam Cœlestem, & Splendorum*; and they are called Stars in the Book of *Job*, 38. vers. 7. The Morning Stars sang together, and all the Sons of God shouted for Joy.

Grot. in locum.

In the very same way and method God destroyed the Army of the Assyrians in one Night. 'Tis said, *Isa.* 37. 36. The Angel of the Lord went forth, and smote in the Camp of the Assyrians, one hundred and eighty five thousand.

Now the Angel of the Lord, very probably, executed this Judgment by Thunder, since in the

The 19th Chap. of St. John's Gospel, verse 29.
 Thunder was not only accounted the Voice of
 God, but of an Angel too: *Some said it thun-*
dred; others, that an Angel spake unto him: and we
 have the unerring Words of David, *He maketh*
his Angels Spirits, and his Ministers a flame of Fire,
Psal. 104. 4. The two Disciples, *Luke 9. 54.*
 were for calling Fire from Heaven, as knowing
 it to be the usual Method of God in taking Ven-
 geance upon his Enemies. And Theodoret ob-
 serves in his time, God scattered the Enemies of
 the Christians by such dreadful Tempests.

Secondly, Let us consider the more ordinary
 Storms and Tempests by which God destroys
 his Enemies. And here he makes use of the
 Ministry of Men, who, tho' they are not Mini-
 string Spirits to execute his Will, are the Mini-
 sters of his Providence; and the Arm of Flesh
 can do his Work as effectually, as if the destroy-
 ing Angel was sent on that Occasion. Thus
1 Sam. 12. 11. God sent Jerubbaal, and Bedan,
 and Jephtha, and Samuel, to deliver them out of the
 Hands of their Enemies on every side.

So he singled David from amongst his Flocks
 of Sheep in the Wilderness, to command the Ar-
 mies of Israel. God, who best knew the Great-
 ness of his Mind, was not for burying such a Ta-
 lent in a solitary Desert, nor for employing such

an Heroick and Daring Genius, in Combating with Bears and Lions that would prey on his Flesh, but rather with Uncircumcised Philistines, that defied the Armies of the Living God: And therefore found an unexpected Patron to introduce him to Court, and made his Prince acquainted with his incomparable Virtues. Behold, I have seen the Son of Jesse a Bethlehemite, a mighty valiant Man, and a Man of War, and prudent in Matters, and a comely Person, and the Lord is with him. 1 Sam. 16. 18.

Dr. Sber-
lock,

In the Words of a great Man, in a Discourse on the like Occasion we are now met, God does not act immediately by himself, but chuseth fit Instruments to execute his Wise and Gracious Designs; and if he does not find them every way fit, he makes them so; and if he raise them somewhat above the common Standard of Nature, this is a new Addition to their Glory.

Nor does he confine himself always to chuse such as are predisposed by Experience and Discipline, to Fight his Battels, and Rule his People; nor yet always the stronger Sex, which Nature has more generally adapted for Business, and Fatigue in War and Government.

Judges 6. 8. He chose Gideon from the Threshing-Floor: The Angel of the Lord appeared unto him, and said unto him, The Lord is with thee, thou mighty Man of Valour. He

He likewise chose *Deborah* a Prophetess, a Judge and Mother in *Israel*. *Josephus* tells us, the People had so great an Opinion of her singular Piety, and Interest in God, that they went unanimously to her, to desire her Intercession in their behalf, that he would be pleas'd in Mercy to forgive them, and rescue them out of the Hands of their cruel Persecutors; and that on her Mediation, God was prevail'd upon to give them a Deliverance, and made choice of *Barak*, of the Tribe of *Naphthali*, as General of the Army, which was to do the Work. The *Rabbins* call her *Mulier Lucernarum*, because, being a Woman strictly and constantly attentive on God's publick and solemn Service, she made, with her own Hands, Tapers and Candles for the Lights of the Sanctuary. Happy is that Nation whose Queen is a *Deborah*, *Mulier Lucernarum*: That not only maintains the Altars, and finds Lights for the Sanctuary; but even out-shines them in the Brightness of her own Virtues.

Such a *Deborah*, such a Mother in our *Israel*, is our most Gracious Sovereign, whose glorious Successes are the certain Omens God has begun to break the Chains of *Europe* by a Woman's Hand: That having put her hand to the Nail, and her right-hand to the Workmans Hammer, she will so effectually fasten the grand Oppressor to the Ground, as never to rise up more. Cease:

Ceate then, *Cyrus*, to imagine a vain thing, that thou shalt subdue and conquer all before thee; since *Thomyris* is in pursuit of thee, to return thy Mischief upon thy own Head, and thy violent Dealing upon thy own Pate.

In the compass of less than five years, since her Majesty's happy Accession to the Throne, what amazing and stupendious Successes have attended her Victorious Arms! To enumerate Particulars, were to trespass too much upon your Time and Patience; these must be written in large Volumes, best befitting their own just proportion, and cannot be comprized in the little Compass of a Sermon, or related in an Hour, which will be the Wonder and Admiration of Ages to come. *Flanders and Italy, Ramillies and the Plain of Piedmont*, display a Scene of the most consummate Generals and Victorious Armies the Sun ever saw, since that great Luminary stood still upon *Gibeon*, till the People avenged themselves of their Enemies. Josh. 10. 12, 13.

Alexander Fought with an effeminate People, whom he conquer'd in a very few years; for which the Historian gives this Reason, *Quia primus ausus est vana contemnere*; before he attack'd them with his Armies, he politickly enquir'd into the Luxury and Weakness of the *Persian Empire*, and saw his way beforehand to an easie Conquest.

Cæsar's

Cæsar's Flourish of *Veni, Vidi, Vici*, to express the Sharpness and quick Dispatch of his Victory over *Pharnaces*, proclaims it rather gotten by a sudden Surprise over him and his *Asiatick* Rabble, than by engaging an Enemy equal in Discipline and Experience. But here, a People that delighted in War, whose Meat and Drink was to do the Will of their Ambitious Monarch; whose Feet had been ever swift to Victory, and their Name a Terror to their Neighbours; commanded by such Generals as were Men of War from their Youth: These with their Armies did fly and were discomfitted; and they of the HOUSEHOLD, that were wont to divide the Spoil, became an easie Prey to the Conquerors. Thunder-struck with our repeated Victories, one of their Generals, dying of his Wounds, wish'd only to live till he had told the *French King*, HIS SOLDIERS WANTED HEARTS, AND HIS GENERALS HEADS FOR CONDUCT IN THE FIELD.

E. of Clare,
after the
Battel of
Ramillies.

Shall not these, even his own Armies, without Hearts, and without Heads, take up a Parable against him, and a taunting Proverb, and say,
*Wo unto him that increaseth that which is not his;
Shall they not rise up suddenly that shall bite thee,
and awake that shall vex thee, and thou shalt be for Booties*

Booties unto them ; because thou hast spoiled many Nations, all the remnant of the People shall spoil thee, Habak. chap. 2.

Thirdly, I shall hasten to shew what Influence the Consideration of our Successes ought to have upon us, who are met upon this solemn occasion of rejoicing for the great and glorious Victories God has lately vouchsafed to the Arms of our Gracious Soveragin and her Allies.

And here, let us not glory in the Arm of Flesh : It is God that giveth the Victory, therefore let him that glorieth, glory in the Lord. Jer. 9. 24. Certainly the greatest Ensign of Glory, and which the Greatest Hero can value himself upon, is, that God thinks him a fit Instrument of bringing about the most intricate Purposes of his Providence ; the Revolutions of Empires, States and Nations depending, under God, upon the Issues of Battel, either for their Prosperity or Downfal.

As this Consideration, on the one hand should inspire the greatest Captains with a just Honour and Esteem for God and Piety ; so should it induce all that have the common benefit of their Successes, to have a due Value and Respect for them whom God has distinguished by such remarkable

remarkable Instances of Power and Conduct ;
that we admire every Star according to its Mag-
nitude, who in their Courses fought against Sise-
ras, tho' one Star differeth from another Star in
Glory.

But still in the midst of our Exultations and
Triumphs, That Saul bath slain his Thousands, and
David his ten Thousands, let us not swerve from
our Text ; that the Affairs of War are not carried
on by Humane Force, or the Hurry of a Blind
Fate or Fortune : God is still Lord Paramount,
who, tho' he enable other Causes, keeps the Reins
of Success in his own Hands. The most formi-
dable Army, without the Divine Impulse and
Conduct, is like a Watch with a broken Spring,
a lifeless inanimate Machine. But that to which
God gives Victory, he gives Life and Vigour,
and regular Motion. 'Twas the Folly of proud
Rabshekah, which he dearly paid for to his eternal
Disgrace, and the Loss of his huge Army, to de-
pend on his own Counsel, and Strength for
War.

We need not go far for a Parallel, in a Vain-glo-
rious Neighbouring Monarch, that has assumed to
himself the Almighty Attribute of making Princes
in all Lands, Psal. 45. 17. That had so strong-

ly fancied and affected Universal Empire, that he vainly believed he actually possessed the Neighbouring Thrones of Spain and England, and as arrogantly disposed of them, as if he had bound their Kings in Chains, and their Nobles in Fetters of Iron.

But praised be God, that blasted all his hopes! His ambitious Projects are but a Dream and a Fancy; A deceitful Heart hath turned him aside, and is there not a Lye in his Right Hand, Isaiah 44. 20. God sitteth in the Congregation of the Mighty, he judgeth among the Gods, Psal. 82. 1. And when they rage and swell, and their Tumult is come up into his Ears, he puts a Stopper into their Nose, and a Bridle into their Lips; and whether they will repent and humble themselves or no, he will make them sensible with Amos 4. That it is meet to be subject to God, and that Man that is Mortal should not think himself, as if he were God. 2. Macc. 9. That there is no King feared by the multitude of an Host, neither any mighty Man delivered by much Strength. Psal. 33. 6. But it is God that delivereth us from our Enemies, yea, that lifteth us up above those that rise against us, and that delivereth us from the violent Man. Therefore will we give Thanks unto Him amongst the Nations, and sing

sing Praises unto his Name. Psal. 18. 48, 49.

But if we would discharge this Duty successfully, let us take care above all things to set off ~~this our~~ Thanksgiving with these agreeable and indispensable Qualifications; Sincere Piety towards God, Dutiful Obedience to the Queen, and all that have Authority under her; and in Brotherly Love and Charity one towards another.

First, Sincere Piety towards God; that our Gratitude for the Successes and Victories we enjoy over our Enemies, express it self in a more strict and universal Performance of Holy Duties amongst our selves. The Mercies of God are designed to make us better.

This is the Day that the Lord hath made, and there is no Person, so dissolute and irreligious, but will make this Inference, We will rejoice and be glad in it.

But then, how will they rejoice? only with their Mouths and Lips, not from a hearty Sense and Acknowledgment of the Goodness of God. But to be religiously joyful, is to fill our Minds with sincere Devotion; that our Souls be the better for the many Advantages our Persons, Estates and Liberties enjoy.

In the Words of the Royal Martyr, ' Those Vi-
 ' ctories are still miserable that leave our Sins un-
 ' subdu'd, flushing our Pride, and animating to
 ' continue Injuries. Peace it self is not desirable,
 ' till Repentance has prepared us for it. ΕΙΚΟΝ
 ΒΑΣΙΛΙΚΗ. p. 169.

Had we Peace without Repentance, we might
 possibly for a time be quiet, but be far from be-
 ing safe, and have just reason to suspect the fre-
 quent Successes God gives us, are only a Retreat
 of his Providence to draw us into an Ambuscade,
 that he may at once involve us in deserved Mi-
 sery and Ruine. There is no greater Traitor
 to his Country, than an incorrigible wicked
 Man. The Man that has no Concern for God
 and Religion, will have but little regard for his
 Native Country. He can live easie under any
 Religion that invades not his Property. The
 reason he is a Protestant, is not that he has ap-
 proved his Profession to his Understanding and
 Conscience, but because it is his Interest to be
 so. Tyranny and Arbitrary Power are uneasie
 to Flesh and Blood; and did they not go along
 with Popery, it would be the only Religion he
 could chuse.

Secondly,

Secondly, Demonstration of our Joy and Gratitude will express itself in dutiful Obedience to the Queen, and all those that bear Authority under her; by whose Auspicious Ministry we enjoy so great Prosperity: That we all contribute to make the Burthen of her Crown as Easy as it is Glorious.

Even our Enemies being Judges, The English is a Brave and Warlike Nation. Could we once but learn to Obey at home, as well as Conquer abroad, there need no more to compleat our Happiness. Let God, that teacheth our Hands to war, and our Fingers to fight, teach us also to obey those that have the Rule over us. That,

In the Last place, We may lead Quiet and Peaceable Lives, in all Godliness and Honesty, in pursuance to her Majesty's constant Declarations for Peace and Unity.

Then may we, with the Royal Psalmist, merrily Sing unto the Lord our God, Psal. 65.
Thou Crownest the Year with thy Goodness.

Then may we hope to see that Glorious Day, when the Laurel and Olive-branch shall kindly twine together in one Wreath, to adorn the Temples of our Victorious Queen.

The Crown of all God's Attributes is his Goodness, with which he has Enobled and Distinguished this Year from the rest, in the Course of Time; We hope and pray to declare the next a welcome Jubilee to all Europe, as Moses did to Israel, Levit. 25. 10. Ye shall proclaim Liberty throughout all the Land, and unto all the Inhabitants thereof; it shall be a Jubilee unto you, and you shall return every Man unto his own Possession, and ye shall return every Man unto his own Family.

And since this is the last Day in which we commemorate the Successes of the whole Year, Let us, with grateful Hearts, praise that Goodness which has thus crowned it, and say with exalted David, Psal. 118. 23, 24. This is the Lord's Doing, and it is Marvellous in our eyes: This is the Day which the Lord hath made, we will rejoice and be glad in it.

Now to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, be ascribed all Honour and Glory, Dominion and Might, Majesty and Power, this Day, and henceforth and for evermore. Amen.

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